

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LONDON NIACT IMMEDIATE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STOCKHOLM 2984

EXDIS

LONDON FOR SECRETARY

DEPARTMENT FOR EAGLEBURGER ONLY

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SW, AO, CU

SUBJECT: CASTRO MESSAGE TO PALME ON ANGOLA

1. PALME HAS ASKED THAT THE FULL TEXT OF A RECENT ORAL MESSAGE FROM CASTRO TO PALME, AS CONVEYED BY CUBAN AMBASSADOR IN STOCKHOLM ALCALDE-VALLS AND RECORDED BY PALME'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS ASSISTANT, PIERRE SCHORI, BE PASSED TO SECRETARY KISSINGER (SEPTTEL). DEFENSIVE AND CONCILIATORY IN TONE, THE MESSAGE CONTAINS A CUBAN CLAIM THAT CUBAN TROOPS ARE BEING WITHDRAWN FROM ANGOLA AT A RATE OF 200 PER WEEK, AND THAT HALF WILL BE GONE BY THE END OF THE YEAR. THE MESSAGE PORTRAYS THE SOVIET UNION AS HAVING BEEN DRAGGED INTO ANGOLA BY CUBAN INITIATIVES.

2. MESSAGE WAS PASSED TO US BY SVERKER ASTROM, MFA SECRETARY GENERAL, WITH FOLLOWING BACKGROUND COMMENTS.

3. CUBAN VICE-PREMIER OF FOREIGN RELATIONS CARLOS RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ VISITED MOSCOW IN APRIL. CUBAN AMBASSADOR TO STOCKHOLM OSCAR E. ALCALDE-VALLS WAS ALSO IN MOSCOW AT THE TIME OF RODRIGUEZ'S VISIT, AND RODRIGUEZ TRANSMITTED TO ALCALDE A "PERSONAL" MESSAGE
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FROM CASTRO TO PALME. ON APRIL 30 ALCALDE CALLED ON

PALME AND VERBALLY DELIVERED CASTRO'S MESSAGE. THE MESSAGE WAS TRANSCRIBED BY PALME'S AIDE, PIERRE SCHORI.

4. FACT THAT ALCALDE RECEIVED THIS MESSAGE VIA RODRIGUEZ WAS, AS FAR AS THE SWEDES KNOW, "A COINCIDENCE." THEY ARE AWARE OF NO SOVIET INVOLVEMENT, AND DON'T KNOW WHY ALCALDE HAPPENED TO BE IN MOSCOW.

5. THE TEXT OF THE MESSAGE HAS BEEN CLOSELY HELD, SAID ASTROM. NOT EVEN THE SWEDISH EMBASSY IN HAVANA HAS RECEIVED IT AS YET. HOWEVER, NOW THAT A PARTIAL VERSION HAS LEAKED TO PRESS, THE MFA WILL SEND IT TO SELECTED SWEDISH EMBASSIES. ASTROM ASKS US TO BE DISCREET ABOUT THE MATTER.

6. SWEDISH AFTERNOON PRESS MAY 25 ERRONEOUSLY DESCRIBES MESSAGE AS "LETTER" FROM CASTRO TO PALME, AND ALSO AS OBVIOUSLY INTENDED FOR RELAY TO SECRETARY KISSINGER. LATTER THESIS BACKED BY PIERRE SCHORI IN BRIEFING TO PRESS. SCHORI IS DESCRIBED AS SAYING THAT CASTRO WANTED TO DEMONSTRATE HIS RESPECT FOR PALME AND THAT MESSAGE SHOWS HOW GOOD SWEDISH-CUBAN RELATIONS ENABLE SWEDEN TO PLAY IMPORTANT INTERMEDIARY ROLE IN WORLD AFFAIRS.

7. EMBASSY COMMENT: WHILE SOME SWEDISH SPOKESMEN MILDLY DEPLORE MYSTERIOUS "LEAD," EPISODE EMBELLISHES PALME'S IMAGE AS HELPFUL MEDIATOR AND BY PLAYING UP CUBAN WITHDRAWALS SHOULD HELP ATTENUATE WIDESPREAD RESENTMENT IN SWEDEN THAT PALME'S "GOOD FRIEND FIDEL" FELT HIMSELF ABLE TO ENGAGE IN COSTLY MILITARY INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA.
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